

COMMISSION CONNECTION

Newsletter of the Kentucky Commission on Women
Strengthening Kentucky by Strengthening Kentucky's Women

First Summit on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women to address the varied needs of women in the Commonwealth



The Kentucky Commission on Women invites you to be a part of the most exciting project in its history, the first Summit on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women. The Summit will take place at the Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center in Frankfort on June 20-21, 2003.

Convening the Summit is the next step in KCW's efforts to improve the economic status of women in Kentucky. The Kentucky Commission on Women began by holding town meetings across the Commonwealth in the spring of 2001 in order to learn from Kentucky women about the challenges and

resources women face in their communities. A report of the Town Meetings was released in November 2001 to coincide with the appointment of the Governor's Task Force on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women.

The Summit will build on the work of more than 300 Kentuckians whose efforts to identify the barriers to economic success for women began in November 2001. Under the direction of the Governor's Task Force on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women, these volunteers conducted a yearlong review of both challenges and opportunities for Kentucky women. First Lady Judi Conway Patton and former governor Martha Layne Collins co-chaired the 47-member Task Force, which was managed by the Kentucky Commission on Women. The Preliminary Findings of the Task Force were released in December 2002 (see page 2 for an overview of the findings). The final report, which will focus on recommended solutions, will be released at the Summit.

Participants of the Summit will attend plenary and working sessions, the focus of which will be to determine the steps needed to achieve the recommendations of the Task Force and set goals for progress. Registrants will choose an area of focus to work on throughout the working sessions, based on the issues identified as top priorities by the Task Force.

The focus areas will be: Economic Sufficiency, Education, Equity, Leadership, State Government Employees, and Well-being. The Kentucky Commission on Women intends for the Summit on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women to become a biennial event. Participants can expect to leave the Summit with specific plans for improving the status of Kentucky women.

The Summit will bring together citizens, businesses, government, and civic groups to address these critical issues for Kentucky. Model programs and services from across the state will also be showcased at the Summit.

With your participation, the first Summit on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women will be a pioneering event resulting in real and significant change in the lives of Kentucky women and their families. Register now by completing and returning the enclosed registration form with your check or money order.



Governor Martha Layne Collins spoke at the release of the preliminary findings of the Governor's Task Force on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women on December 4, 2002.

Summit on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women Registration Information

The registration fee is \$65, including three meals and all materials. Need-based scholarships will be available.

To register now for the Summit on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women, return the enclosed form along with your check made payable to the Kentucky Commission on Women. For scholarship information, please visit our website at <http://women.state.ky.us> or contact us by phone, mail, or e-mail.

Please note that the deadline for scholarship applications is May 9. Contact KCW for a scholarship application or visit <http://women.state.ky.us>.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF KENTUCKY WOMEN RELEASED

In December 2002, the Governor's Task Force on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women released its preliminary findings from a year-long effort to examine the challenges facing Kentucky women.

"I am very proud to have co-chaired this Task Force made up of so many outstanding Kentuckians. The work of hundreds of volunteers on this ground-breaking project will allow us to benchmark progress in Kentucky for years to come," said Mrs. Patton.

Based on the reports generated by volunteers from across the Commonwealth, the Task Force identified five broad areas affecting the economic status of Kentucky women. "For Kentuckians to achieve a standard of living at or above the national average by 2020, we must address the barriers facing 51 percent of our population, Kentucky's women. Addressing these crucial areas for women will improve the quality of life for ALL Kentuckians," said Governor Collins.

The five areas are as follows:

- **Economic Sufficiency**—Not all women have adequate opportunities to secure quality employment that will lead to self-sufficiency.
- **Education**—Too many Kentuckians, especially females, are undereducated. Although Kentucky has made improvements in its public schools and colleges, the resources of this educational system are underutilized.
- **Equity**—Discrimination persists in many Kentucky workplaces, schools, and all facets of society.
- **Leadership**—Women are drastically underrepresented in positions of power in both the public and private sectors.
- **Well-being**—For many women basic living concerns such as safety, housing, and health care take precedence over getting a better education or a higher-paying job.

The Task Force further noted that women working in state government still face challenges such as discrimination in the workplace and inconsistent application of employment rules and practices.

These five themes serve as the framework for the full report of the Task Force, which will include specific recommendations for improvement in these areas. The full report will be released at the first Summit on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women to be held June 20-21, 2003 in Frankfort (see article on the front page for more information).

For a copy of the preliminary findings, please visit the KCW Website at <http://women.state.ky.us/PrelimFindings.pdf> or call the KCW office at (502) 564-6643.

Substance abuse has strong effect on women

Submitted by Elisa Klein

Substance abuse in Kentucky has received much media attention recently. A special series in the Lexington Herald-Leader highlighted the unique prescription drug epidemic facing residents in Eastern Kentucky and Appalachia. What you may not know, however, is that women are especially affected by this growing problem.

A report by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA) states that even when men and women abuse substances at equal rates, women suffer far worse consequences and a higher rate of addiction. According to CASA, at the same levels of use, females are more likely to become biologically dependent on tobacco and alcohol.

Also, women have a greater likelihood of developing cocaine dependence and are more vulnerable to alcohol-induced brain damage. These physical problems only compound the myriad of unique social barriers women substance abusers face, including intense feelings of shame, guilt, and stigma, extremely high rates of trauma and abuse, parenting concerns, and co-occurring mental health disorders.

While there are no easy answers to the complex problem of addiction, Kentucky has a variety of resources available to women with this problem, and for the providers who work with them. The Kentucky Coalition for Women's Substance Abuse Services at the University of Kentucky Institute on Women and Substance Abuse (a division of the Center for Drug and Alcohol Research) holds quarterly meetings and trainings and serves as a resource to both consumers and providers of substance abuse services.

In addition, the Kentucky Division of Substance Abuse maintains information about gender sensitive substance abuse prevention and treatment services and administers the KIDS NOW: Substance Abuse and Pregnancy Initiative. Further details about programs for women in Kentucky are available at <http://dmhmrs.chr.state.ky.us/sa/treatment>.

For more information about any of the issues or programs mentioned above, please contact Elisa Klein at 502-564-3487 or Elisa.Klein@mail.state.ky.us.



Task Force members Rep. Mary Lou Marzian and Cissy Musselman discuss the preliminary findings at the final meeting of the Governor's Task Force on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE—*At press time, the 2003 Kentucky General Assembly was in progress. Please visit <http://women.state.ky.us> to view a list of bills tracked by KCW.*

KCW honors four very special women as 2003 Kentucky Women Remembered

On March 7, 2003, four new portraits were added to the *Kentucky Women Remembered* watercolor exhibit, honoring four outstanding Kentucky women.

The original *Kentucky Women Remembered* exhibit was created in 1978. Composed of watercolor portraits, the exhibit traveled around the state until 1996 when the tireless efforts of First Lady Judi Patton brought the portraits into the Capitol where they now educate Kentuckians about women's contributions to the Commonwealth.

Also since 1996, a committee of KCW board members annually selects additional women for inclusion in the exhibit from those nominated by citizens of the Commonwealth. KCW received 34 nominations from Kentucky citizens this year, making the committees' decisions incredibly difficult.

Images of the Kentucky Women Remembered portraits can be found on the KCW web site at <http://women.state.ky.us>.

Kentucky artist Alison Davis Lyne painted the 2003 portraits. A resident of Logan County, Kentucky, she works as a freelance illustrator and has illustrated magazine covers, short stories and most recently a children's book. You can see more of her work at www.lyneart.com.

KCW appreciates the generous support of our *Kentucky Women Remembered* sponsors.

The four 2003 *Kentucky Women Remembered* honorees are:



Rosemary Clooney (Mason County)—Rosemary Clooney is widely renowned as one of the greatest jazz band vocalists of all time. Her career spanned over four decades and included several hit songs, roles in major films, and her own radio and television programs. She appeared in films with Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, and recorded with Duke Ellington. Ms. Clooney lived much of her career in California but her heart was always in Kentucky.

Judi Conway Patton (Pike County)—Judi Patton has received numerous local, state, and national awards for tackling tough issues like domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and breast cancer in her role as First Lady. Mrs. Patton is a tireless champion for the protection of families and children. She has also been very involved with the Kentucky Commission on Women, most recently by serving as co-chair of the Governor's Task Force on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women. Her sincerity and devotion to addressing serious issues are praised by the media and deeply appreciated by the people of Kentucky.



Katherine Graham Peden (Christian County)—"Katie did. Katie will." Katherine Peden used that slogan when she became the first Kentucky woman nominated as a U. S. senate candidate and continued on a path of "firsts." She served on both the President's Commission on the Status of Women (under President Kennedy) and the first Kentucky Commission on the Status of Women and was appointed the first female Commissioner of Commerce in Kentucky. Ms. Peden remains dedicated to the Business and Professional Women's Club (BPW) and served as the national president for two years. She was active for decades in issues of economic growth at the national and state level.

Jean Ritchie (Perry County)—Viper's most famous native, Jean Ritchie has brought the beauty and richness of Appalachia to fans around the world. Music was very important in the Ritchie family and Ms. Ritchie grew up with a dulcimer in hand. She was a Fulbright Scholar in 1952 and recently received the National Heritage Fellowship, the highest honor bestowed to individual traditional artists in the nation. An author, songwriter, and performer, Ms. Ritchie's influence on traditional folk and popular music is immeasurable.



Kentucky Women Marking History: Highway markers needed for women

ROADSIDE HISTORY: A Guide to Kentucky Highway Markers documents approximately 2073 markers. Of those, only 60 were dedicated to a woman. Another 58 markers merely mentioned a woman.

To increase the number of highway markers dedicated to women, the Kentucky Commission on Women has partnered with the Kentucky Historical Society, Kentucky League of Women Voters, and the Kentucky Department of Transportation to get more markers erected that honor women and their contributions to Kentucky.

We need your help! Between now and next

fall, we hope you'll join us in choosing women who have made the greatest contributions to the Commonwealth.

The highway markers program has two deadlines: **April 1, 2003 and October 1, 2003**. Application forms are available from the Kentucky Historical Society and the application process does require primary sources to document the information provided in the application (letters, diaries, newspaper articles, etc.). Each bronze marker costs \$1700 and we know there are companies and individuals who will underwrite such a worthwhile project for Kentucky women's history. The name of the

individual or organization sponsoring the marker will be identified on the marker.

We all know how important it is for girls and young women to have strong role models who inspire their futures. Help us find role models all across the Commonwealth so that we have more historic roadside markers that make visible the enormous contributions of Kentucky women.

For an application package or more information, contact Dianne Wells, Kentucky Historical Society highway marker program manager, at 502-564-1792, X-4476 or Dianne.Wells@mail.state.ky.us.

UPCOMING EVENTS (April through June 2003)

APRIL

2 One Voice for Choice: A Date With History, Kentucky Center for the Arts (501 West Main Street), 6:00 p.m. (5:00 p.m. reception), Louisville

Sarah Weddington, the attorney who won the historic Roe v. Wade decision, and Frances Kissling, head of Catholics for a Free Choice, will discuss reproductive freedom. Co-sponsored by the ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project, the Kentucky Commission on Women, Planned Parenthood of Louisville, and other pro-choice organizations. For tickets, call 502/584-7777 or 800/775-7777. For more information, contact Anne McKune at 502/584-2471 ext. 239 or anne.mckune@ppfa.org.

16 A Gathering of Women, Kentucky Women Called to Action, 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Boone County Extension Office, Burlington

A one-day conference designed to improve the leadership skills of women in the Commonwealth. Features workshops, exhibits from resource organizations, dialogue on important issues, and health information. For more information, please see the brochure on our Web site at <http://women.state.ky.us/gathering3.pdf>, or call 859/586-6101. KCW is a member of Kentucky Women Called to Action. Cost is \$15, scholarships are available.

17 Federally Employed Women—Derby City Chapter, 5:30 p.m., Shoney's (Fern Valley Rd. & I-65), Louisville

Contact Anne Ramsey at 502/315-7041 or Anne.M.Ramsey@lrl02.usace.army.mil for more information.

23 "Empowering the Black Community for the 21st Century," Galt House Hotel, Louisville

For more information, visit www.empoweringky.com or call Corey Bellamy at 502/696-5642.

30 Network of Women in State Government, noon-1:00 p.m., Frankfort Woman's Club (Wapping Street), Frankfort

Speakers will discuss insurance and other benefits for state government employees, employment issues, and membership in employee organizations. Visit <http://networkofwomen.tripod.com> for more information.

MAY

10 FIRST-LINK of the Bluegrass, 9th Annual Human Race 5K, 9:00 a.m., Keeneland Race Course, Lexington

The race benefits over 30 non-profit organizations in Central Kentucky. Registration begins at 8 a.m. on-site, or pre-register and receive a discount at www.first-link.org. For more information, please contact Sara Jefferies at 859/313-LINK or srlegel@yahoo.com.

16-18 Kentucky Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. annual conference, Paducah

For more information, contact Brenda Gunn at 502/585-5390 or bdgunn01@athena.louisville.edu.

17 Hope Harbor Shine Up & Show Off Car and Truck Event, National Corvette Museum, 7 a.m.-1 p.m., Bowling Green

Proceeds benefit Hope Harbor, the rape crisis center serving South Central Kentucky. This car show open to all makes and models with various judging categories, including audience and local celebrities' picks. Driver or spectator, car enthusiasts of all kinds are welcome to attend. Join us for a day filled with music, food, prizes, and course, cars and trucks! For more information, call 270-782-5014 or e-mail hopeharbor@hopeharbor.net.

20 Federally Employed Women—Derby City Chapter, 5:15 p.m., Holiday Inn Downtown (2nd & Broadway), Louisville

Contact Anne Ramsey at 502/315-7041 or Anne.M.Ramsey@lrl02.usace.army.mil for more information.

28 Network of Women in State Government, noon-1:00 p.m., Office Pub and Deli (Schenkel Lane), Frankfort

Treva Wright-Donnell of the Public Protection and Regulation Cabinet will be the guest speaker. Visit <http://networkofwomen.tripod.com> for more information.

JUNE

17 Federally Employed Women—Derby City Chapter, 5:15 p.m., Holiday Inn Downtown (2nd & Broadway) Louisville

Contact Anne Ramsey at 502/315-7041 or Anne.M.Ramsey@lrl02.usace.army.mil for more information.

20-21 Summit on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women, Farnham-Dudgeon Civic Center, Frankfort

Sponsored by KCW. Visit <http://women.state.ky.us/economicsummit.htm> for details as they are finalized. Be a part of this groundbreaking project!

25 Network of Women in State Government Picnic in the Park, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Game Farm (Louisville Rd.), Frankfort

There will be a panel of guest speakers, including Eleanor Jordan, ombudsman for the Cabinet for Families and Children for this year-end, year-beginning meeting. Visit <http://networkofwomen.tripod.com> for more information.

Hopscotch House, a service of the Kentucky Foundation for Women, has personal and group retreat opportunities available April-July 2003. Hopscotch House, a retreat and residency center in east Jefferson County, offers a unique location to get re-inspired by art and natural surroundings. Dates are available for stays during the week or on weekends. For more information please contact Sherry Hurley at 502-228-4875 or by email at sherry@kfw.org. Also, visit www.kfw.org to find out more about Hopscotch House and Kentucky Foundation for Women grant programs.

SEND US EVENT INFORMATION—To have an event placed on our Web site calendar, e-mail the information to KCW@mail.state.ky.us or mail it to the KCW address. You may view our calendar at <http://women.state.ky.us/events.htm>.

Foundation created to support Kentucky Commission on Women

The Kentucky Commission on Women (KCW) is excited to announce the creation of the Kentucky Commission on Women Foundation (KCWF), a brand new not-for-profit fundraising arm of the KCW.

The mission of the Kentucky Commission on Women Foundation is to support and enhance the programs and mission of the Kentucky Commission on Women in the areas of education, leadership, research, and the elimination of gender discrimination in Kentucky. The first project of the KCWF will be to support the biennial Summit on the Economic Status of Kentucky's Women, the first of which will take place on June 20-21, 2003.

All contributions to the KCWF are tax-deductible and can be mailed to the KCW address. As the Foundation grows, it will support other projects of KCW (i.e. Kentucky Women Remembered) and it is hoped that eventually KCWF will develop a scholarship program for women interested in attending conferences and other types of professional development.

Before and After Roe v. Wade

By Kim Green

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Hardly a week goes by without another assault by our government on reproductive health. It's frightening for all of us, for our present and future daughters, for our present and future granddaughters. It's important to put some historical perspective on today's precarious status of *Roe v. Wade* and reproductive health rights in general.

Before *Roe*. Since colonial times, abortion was legal in America until "quickening," the time at which the fetus could survive outside the womb. Beginning, however, around the mid-1800s, states began imposing criminal sanctions on abortions. A few of those states rescinded their criminal laws in the early 1900s. Then the United States Supreme Court recognized a constitutional right to privacy for procreation when it decided the *Griswold* case in 1965. In that case, the Supreme Court invalidated a state statute making it illegal to use contraceptives because that violated a married couple's right to privacy. In 1972, in the *Eisenstadt* case, the Supreme Court extended that ruling to single people.

One year later, in *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court recognized that a constitutional right to privacy protects a woman's right to decide whether to be a parent. That right, of course, is not absolute because of the state's interest in protecting potential life. But that interest does not override the woman's right to choose until the fetus becomes viable.

Roe v. Wade has had a tremendous effect on the lives of women in America. Prior to *Roe*, a 1965 study showed that over 17% of pregnancy- and birth-related deaths were caused by illegal abortions. Today a first trimester abortion is 11 times safer than childbirth. The right to make their own child bearing decisions has also enabled women to pursue educational and employment opportunities previously foreclosed to them. The Supreme Court expressly recognized this in its 1992 *Casey* decision. "The ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the Nation has been facilitated by their ability to control their reproductive lives." All women have a story to illustrate this truth.

Since *Roe*. Since 1973 antagonists have been chipping away at the right to choose. The Supreme Court has upheld bans on government-funded (Medicaid and military) abortions; has upheld parental consent and parental notice requirements for women under 18; and has okayed statutes requiring women to make multiple trips and endure lengthy waiting periods between receiving the information necessary for informed consent and receiving the abortion.

In 2000, the Supreme Court struck down a statute prohibiting late-term abortions (it did not contain an exception to protect the health of the woman), but did so by the narrowest of margins, 5-4. When one Supreme Court justice retires, as appears likely in 2003, if President Bush nominates a successor antagonistic to reproductive health rights, this decision will be in jeopardy. If more than one justice leaves the court, *Roe v. Wade* is in grave peril.

The courts aren't the only government institution which effect women's reproductive health rights. Administrative appointments and regulations have also been eroding those rights one piece at a time. And it's far more than abortion restrictions.

It's contraception and sexuality education, as well. Lately, the pace of these restrictions has escalated at the speed of a roller coaster that's crested the big climb. Consider these examples:

On President Bush's first day in office, he announced his global gag rule which requires foreign nongovernmental organizations to agree to withhold information about the legal option of abortion from pregnant women receiving family planning services. This is a condition for the NGO to receive U.S. Agency for International Development funds for family planning.

The administration blocked the United States' \$34 million pledge to U.N.F.P.A. even though Congress had approved it last year with President Bush's approval. That U.N. agency distributes contraceptives, supports sexuality education for youth, and works to prevent sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS, all in underdeveloped countries.

There is zero increase for family planning funding in the FY03 budget, but a \$33 million increase for abstinence-only sex education.

Dr. David Hager, affiliated with the University of Kentucky, was appointed to the FDA's Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Committee...He assisted the Christian Medical Association with a "citizen's petition" calling on the FDA to reverse its approval of RU486 (mifepristone), a drug which has been used effectively and safely by many thousands of women.

The Bush administration has adopted the radical right's effort to redefine "person." For example, a new SCHIP regulation includes fetus in the definition of a "child" eligible for prenatal care. And the committee that advised the government about protecting people who participate in medical and scientific research was abolished and replaced. The new committee's charter includes "embryo" as a person to be protected. The Family Resource Council has boasted that this will lead to banning abortions.

The U.S. reneged on its commitment to the Cairo Accord of 1994 (a blueprint for confronting population problems in the developing world by improved health care and education, AIDS prevention, and expanding the legal rights of women). The administration objected to providing birth control to third world women except for thermometers they could use to practice "natural" birth control.

The National Cancer Institute website was changed - at the urging of several anti-choice legislators - to describe the evidence of an alleged link between abortion and breast cancer as inconclusive. Reference to the biggest study ever done - one of 1.5 million Danish women that showed no link at all - was removed.

Likewise, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website contains a bold-faced warning: "The surest way to avoid transmission of diseases is to abstain from sexual intercourse." The actual science, which could save lives, is much less prominent: "Laboratory studies have demonstrated that latex condoms provide an essentially impermeable barrier."

Some might say that all of this is just another example of how the pendulum swings. Or that we're going through another cycle on this issue. But some things are best not repeated or recycled. Like racial segregation. And like government control of women's reproductive decisions.

REGISTER NOW!



A New Vision for Kentucky

**June 20-21, 2003
Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center
Frankfort, KY**

**Registration form enclosed
for more information visit
<http://women.state.ky.us>
or call 502/564-6643**

A project of the Kentucky Commission on Women

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KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON
WOMEN

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